

1997-98 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Senate Committee on
Agriculture and
Environmental
Resources
(SC-AER)

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TESTIMONY BY SENATOR ROD MOEN

Senate Bill 460

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environmental Resources

Wednesday, February 25, 1998 10:00 a.m.

Hearing Room 2, Lower Level, 119 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Chairperson Clausing, members of the committee, my name is Terry Tuschen and I am here today on behalf of Senator Rod Moen, who is the author of Senate Bill 460. Senator Moen is unable to be here today due to a committee conflict and asked me to provide testimony on his behalf.

During the 1995-96 legislative session, 1995 Wisconsin Act 27 (the state budget bill) changed the existing statutes which related to fishing licenses for certain disabled veterans and disabled residents by eliminating the free permanent fishing license provision and subsequently charging these disabled persons a fee of \$6.25 for the annual resident fishing license.

Chapter s. 29.145(1c) specifically provided for a Permanent Fishing License for Disabled Persons and stated that the department shall issue a permanent fishing license to any resident who applies for this license and who does one of the following:

- (a) Produces a certificate from a licensed physician or optometrist stating that his or her sight is impaired to the degree that he or she cannot read ordinary newspaper print with or without corrective glasses.
- (b) Produces evidence that shows that he or she is receiving benefits under [federal statutes] because of a determination that he or she is disabled.
- (c) Produces evidence that shows that he or she is a veteran, as defined in 38 USC 101, and is receiving disability compensation benefits under [federal statutes] for a reduction in earning capacity that is rated greater than 70 percent under United States statutes.

Senate Bill 460 is legislation which will modify existing law and return the appropriate statutes to their pre-1995 position and again provide that those disabled veterans and disabled residents are eligible to be issued a permanent resident fishing license at no charge.

Deserving veterans who have been injured or wounded while serving their country as well as disabled residents, who might have a limited income potential due to their disability, could benefit greatly from this effort. I feel this provision is good public policy and appropriate under the current fiscal climate in this state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill. I am willing to work with the committee and other interested parties who might have any concerns with this legislation.

Honorable Senator Alice Clausing
Chairperson, Senate Agriculture and Environment Resources Committee

Dear Senator Clausing

My name is Gary Homuth, Conservation Warden with the Department of Natural Resources and am here to testify in opposition to SB 460.

This proposal would allow certain persons with disabilities to obtain a free fishing license. Our opposition stems simply from a significant loss of revenue. It is estimated that approximately 7500 disabled and disabled veteran licenses are sold per year. If these licenses were free, we would lose almost \$52,000. Additionally, we would lose a matching grant from the Federal Sport Fish Restoration account equaling over \$50,000 for a total revenue loss of over \$100,000.

Thank-you

Gary Homuth
Bureau of Law Enforcement
266-3244